

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 SP-02 STR-04 TRSE-00

LAB-04 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 L-03 DODE-00 DOTE-00

FMC-01 CG-00 OFA-01 DLOS-03 SS-15 NSC-05 /078 W

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R 061735Z JUN 75

FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8998

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 728

AMEMBASSY BERN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, EEC, US

SUBJECT: PROPOSED EC INLAND WATERWAY TONNAGE CAPACITY REGULATIONS--
US LASH/SEABEE OPERATIONS

REFS: A. STATE 280148, DEC. 24, 1974

B. EC BRUSSELS 9941, DEC. 16, 1974

C. STATE 64138, APRIL 1, 1974

D. EC BRUSSELS A-158, JUNE 10, 1974

1. SUMMARY: THE POSITIVE TREND TOWARD EXCLUDING ALL SHIP-BORNE BARGES FROM THE EC SCHEME FOR LAYING UP RIVER BARGES WAS REVERSED AT A TECHNICAL LEVEL MEETING BETWEEN THE EC AND SWITZERLAND IN MID-MAY. NO FINAL DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN ON THE ISSUE, BUT THE WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATION WOULD MEAN THAT BACAT BARGES WOULD BE EXCLUDED IMMEDIATELY. LASH BARGES WOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE SCHEME AFTER THE DUTCH COMPLETE A PROGRAM TO BREAK-UP OLD BARGES AND SEABEE BARGES WOULD BE INCLUDED. A HIGH LEVEL EC-SWISS MEETING WHICH MAY DEAL WITH THE ISSUE IS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 23. END SUMMARY.

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2. THE TREND TOWARD EXCLUDING SHIP-BORNE BARGES FROM THE EC SCHEME FOR THE TEMPORARY LAYING-UP OF RIVER BARGES THAT WAS REPORTED IN REF B WAS REVERSED AT AN EC-SWISS WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD IN STRASBOURG ON MAY 15-16. ACCORDING TO EC COMMISSION AND PERM REP SOURCES, THE MEMBER STATE, EC COMMISSION AND SWISS TECHNICAL LEVEL PEOPLE PRESENT REACHED AGREEMENT ON EXCLUDING FROM THE SCHEME SHIP-BORNE BARGES OF LESS THAN 400 METRIC TONS DEADWEIGHT CAPACITY. HOWEVER, SHIP-BORNE BARGES IN THE 300-400 METRIC TON CATEGORY WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE SCHEME UNTIL COMPLETION OF A DUTCH PROGRAM TO BREAK UP OUTMODED BARGES. THE AGREEMENT OF THE TECHNICIANS, WHICH ALL SOURCES STRESSED IS NOT BINDING, IS PATTERNED AFTER A DECEMBER NEGOTIATING DECISION OF THE EC COUNCIL WHICH SAID THAT ALL VESSELS UNDER 400 METRIC TONS WOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE SCHEME FOLLOWING THE COMPLETION FO THE DUTCH PROGRAM, AND VESSELS UNDER 300 METRIC TONS DEADWEIGHT CAPACITY WOULD BE EXCLUDED EVEN DURING GHE TRANSITION PERIOD. ALL OCEAN GOING VESSELS, HOWEVER, WOULD BE EXCLUDED.

3. AS REPORTED IN REF B, THE DECEMBER EC COUNCIL DID NOT REACH A DECISION ON THE QUESTION OF SHIP-BORNE BARGES AND AGREED THAT THE ISSUE WOULD BE DECIDED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SWISS. THE ABOVE WORKING GROUP AGREEMENT WILL BE DISCUSSED AT A HIGH LEVEL MEETING OF MEMBER STATE, COMMISSION AND SWISS OFFICIALS ON JUNE 23. A DEFINITIVE DECISION COULD BE TAKEN AT THAT TIME.

4. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE FAVORABLY TREND TOWARD EXCLUSION WAS REVERSED BECAUSE THE BRITISH AND DUTCH DROPPED THEIR OPPOSITION TO INCLUDING SHIP-BORNE BARGES. THIS IS UNDERSTANDABLE BECAUSE THE BARGES OPERATED UNDER EUROPEAN FLAGS ARE BACAT BARGES OF 147 METRIC TONS AND LASH BARGES OF 375 METRIC TONS. BOTH WILL EVENTUALLY BE EXCLUDED FROM THE SCHEME. THE U.S. TYPE BARGES CURRENTLY BEING OPERATED IN EUROPE, WE UNDERSTAND, ARE SEABEE BARGES OF 847 LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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METRIC TONS.

5. REGARDING THE DUTCH PROGRAM WE UNDERSTAND THAT IT HAS NOT YET BEEN APPROVED BY THE DUTCH PARLIAMENT AND THEREFORE IT COULD TAKE A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF TIME TO BE APPROVED AND THEN COMPLETED.

6. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH EC COMMISSION OFFICIALS, WE

HAVE REITERATED THE POINTS MADE IN REFERENCE C
AND ALSO NOTE THE APPARENT DISCRIMINATION IN A
400 TON CUT-OFF. WE HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT THE
UNITED STATES FEELS VERY STRONGLY THAT INCLUSION OF SHIP-
BORNE BARGES IN THE RIVER BARGE SCHEME WOULD BE UNFAIR
AND HARMFUL TO US COMMERCIAL INTERESTS.

7. COMMENT: IT WOULD STILL BE USEFUL, WE BELIEVE,
TO PROVIDE THE COMMISSION WITH THE INFORMATION
REQUESTED IN REF B, WHICH THE DEPARTMENT INDICATED
IT WAS TRYING TO DEVELOP (REF A). END COMMENT. GREENWALD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORTATION, CARGO SHIPS, TRANSPORTATION TAXES, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ECBRU05075
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750199-0237
From: EC BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750671/aaaacmjj.tel
Line Count: 126
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 280148, 75 DE24, 75 1974
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 APR 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <04 NOV 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROPOSED EC INLAND WATERWAY TONNAGE CAPACITY REGULATIONS-- US LASH/SEABEE OPERATIONS
TAGS: ETRN, US, EEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006